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Telework Bill Passes House

□ *Nearly twenty years after first being introduced, Congress adopts cost-savings and government efficiency legislation*

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WASHINGTON – The House of Representatives today passed H.R. 1722, the Telework Enhancement Act of 2010, to improve government efficiency by requiring agencies to establish telework policies. The bipartisan cost-savings measure that was first introduced in the House nearly twenty years ago, passed the House by a vote of 254-152.

Chairman Edolphus “Ed” Towns (D-NY), a strong supporter of the legislation, stated that H.R. 1722 “saves the government money, reduces energy consumption, and increases worker productivity.”

H.R. 1722 was introduced in the 111th Congress by Representatives John Sarbanes (D-MD) and referred to the Oversight and Government Reform Committee.

[After passing out of the committee unanimously](#)

in April 2010, the

[House passed](#)

H.R. 1722 on July 14, 2010, by a vote of 290 – 131.

The Senate amended the bill and passed it by unanimous consent on September 29, 2010.

The Senate changes to H.R. 1722 represent a compromise between the House-passed bill and Senate legislation introduced by Senator Daniel Akaka (D-HI). The Senate-passed bill requires each agency to establish a policy within six months that authorizes agency employees to telework and directs the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to provide policy guidance to agencies and to annually report on agency telework programs.

H.R. 1722 does not require any mandatory spending and is compliant with statutory and House PAYGO rules. The Congressional Budget Office issued a cost estimate on the bill, finding it would cost agencies \$30 million over the first five years to implement. The CBO methodology does not take into account dynamic cost issues such as increased productivity during emergency situations and other efficiencies.

In recent years, telework has increasingly been viewed as an important tool for ensuring continuity of essential government services in emergencies. John Berry, the Director of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM), estimated that during the snowstorm that crippled the Washington, DC area in the winter of 2010, telework reduced the cost of lost productivity for the Federal government from \$100 million a day to \$71 million. H.R. 1722 requires agencies with continuity of operations plans (COOP) to incorporate telework into those plans.

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